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C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 001692

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [KISL](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: EAST BANK MODERATE ELECTED LEADER OF MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD

REF: A. AMMAN 1364

[B](#). AMMAN 1177

Classified By: Charge d'affaires Daniel Rubinstein, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. ( U ) The newly-elected Shura Council of Jordan,s Muslim Brotherhood chose a new executive board March 3, to be led by Salem al-Falahat as Controller General (&al-Muraqib al-Aam.8) Falahat succeeds 12-year incumbent Abdul Majeed Al-Thuneibat, who surprised Amman,s political pundits by withdrawing his candidacy for re-election a few days before Falahat was chosen.

[1](#)2. ( C ) Falahat, like Thuneibat, is an East Banker, and most observers identify him with the Brotherhood,s traditional avoidance of confrontation with the GOJ and its focus on charity and religious outreach. Some contacts, like former Brotherhood official turned political columnist Ibrahim Gharaibeh, put Falahat at the head of a reform faction in the movement. This faction is dominated by East Bankers, like Thuneibat,s circle, but is a generation younger and has reportedly criticized Thuneibat for lax administration of the movement and its many charitable operations. Both Thuneibat and Falahat opposed the more radical tendency in the movement, made up largely of Palestinian-Jordanians, that calls for more aggressive criticism of GOJ policies. Gharaibeh (an East Banker) told poloff he expects Falahat to focus the movement,s energies on pressing for reform of Jordan,s electoral law, and on improving the movement,s administration.

[1](#)3. ( C ) Gharaibeh predicted that Zaki Bani Irsheid, a West Banker nominated last month by the Brotherhood,s establishment to lead the Brotherhood's political party, the Islamic Action Front, would at the request of the leadership now either withdraw his candidacy, or be set aside, to make way for a new, East Banker nominee. (Reporting in other channels tracks with Gharaibeh,s assessment.) Gharaibeh explained this as a reaction to the Hamas victory across the River Jordan, and a decision of both the Brotherhood,s leadership and the GOJ to keep a tight rein on Brothers who might identify too closely with Hamas.

[1](#)4. ( C ) Comment: Early indications are that the Muslim Brotherhood,s East Bank establishment, along with moderate West Bankers, and with help from Jordan,s security services, have succeeded in preventing a &Hamas effect8 from altering the course of the movement,s leadership elections. In order to satisfy the elements of the movement,s base that are more radical (and largely Palestinian-Jordanian), however, the new leadership may still need to increase its criticism of the GOJ on select issues. End comment.

[1](#)5. (SBU) Biographic information on Falahat:

Salem al Falahat is an East Banker from the Madaba area. He

was born in 1954 in Al-Jdayeh, near Madaba. He earned a BA in Shari,ah. He worked as a teacher and principal in government schools, and later as a principal of one of the Dar Al-Arqam chain of private Islamic schools. He is a member of the board of the Madaba Education and Investment Company, a charitable foundation. He was a founding member of the Islamic Action Front, and a former officer of its executive board.

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